# RELATION BETWEEN TEACHERS' DEMOGRAPHIC AND PROFESSIONAL PROFILE AND THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS OF TEACHING PROFESSION

By

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Teachers in higher education are not contrastingly different from the primary and secondary school teachers in terms of their ethical obligations to their stakeholders. However in higher education teachers' professionalism and their attitude towards ethical obligations are believed to be more important for ensuring quality education services. The present study explored similar attitude and its relationship with teachers' demographic and professional profile. The investigation was done through a questionnaire survey involving 137 teachers of one selected academy of higher education in Tamil Nadu. The findings do not provide strong evidence that respondents have desirable commitment to their professional obligations. Also it has been revealed that while teachers' demographic profile has no impact on their attitude but their professional profile has partial impact.

Key words: Teaching Profession, Ethical Obligations and Attitude.

#### INTRODUCTION

From the time of ancient civilizations the pedagogy has been considered not only as a method for 'transmission of knowledge' but also for building the moral behaviour of a society (Pradhan, 2002: 29). Since its inception the teaching or pedagogy was very much concerned for the transmission of the religious, philosophical and moral traditions from one generation to the next (Pradhan, ibid; Agarwal, 2002:17-22). Thus 'moral and 'ethical' concerns have always been given due importance in the practice of teaching since long.

In several countries of the world teachers' associations have developed their respective code of ethics. The idea of a professional code of ethics for teachers first came in to existence in Georgia, U.S.A. (1896), then in California (1904) and Alabama (1908). Later on in 1929, the National Education Association (U.S.A.) adopted a national code for teachers (Reavis and Judd, 1942: 547; Stinnett and Huggett, 1963: 318-326; Gupta, 1986:207-211). Also, the existence of similar code of ethics for teachers has been found in UK, Canada, France, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, The Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand, Malta, Singapore and Hong Kong (Cheng, 1996).

In India the moral and ethical concerns in teaching are as old as its civilization. The ancient Indian civilization had refined its pedagogic practices where the Acharya not only looked after the intellectual but also the moral, ethical and spiritual well being of his disciples (Pradhan, ibid). For that purpose the teachers in the Gurukula system were to follow the moral or ethical way of life. In modern India, the teaching profession has made several progresses in terms of its institutionalization and practice but till 1950s there was no such written statement of teachers' own code of professional ethics (D'Souza, 1958: 69). In 1966 at the All India Preparatory Seminars on Student Teaching and Evaluation at Allahabad, an effort was made to develop the professional code for teachers and the code was published by the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi. Again in 1968 at Chandigarh Seminar on Student Teaching and Evaluation organized by NCERT, a revised version of earlier set of codes was developed (Pandey and Khosla, 1974:92-95). Also the issue of code of conduct for teachers has been discussed and given due importance by teachers' organizations in India (Mahajani, 1970: 83; Manuel, 1970: 8; Singha, 1986: 279; Gokak, 1986: 32). The National

Commission on Teachers also have expressed the need of a code of ethics for teachers (Bhatt and Aggarwal, 1987:366-372). It has been revealed that the All-India Federation of Educational Associations, the Mysore State Education Federation and the Maharashtra Madhayamik Shikshak Sangh officially adopted codes but have not yet made much progress in enforcing them (file://Y:\code of ethics\2Q410A02.htm, date:3/13/2009). The exact reasons of apathy towards codes among teachers are not known. There is hardly any evidence, which can throw light on the matter. One of the problems might be the mushrooming of teachers' associations in India, which otherwise had been recognised as a threat to the unity of teaching profession and thus there is no consensus about the form and purpose of such codes.

Also, it is evident that the poor performance of teachers has been rampant and widely spread in every segment of the country (file://Y:\code of ethics\2Q410A02.htm, date: 3/13/2009). The idea for a code of conduct for teachers has been debated for many years now but there has been no consensus about how it is to be developed. Should we adopt a foreign code or undertake empirical assessments to develop an indigenous one? The All India Federation of Educational Organizations suggested that a code should be evolved through consultation with teachers' organizations. However mere consultation may not help adequately unless substantiated by empirical evidences. This is required to make the process inclusive and to make it sensitive to cultural diversities of the society.

According to Sherif and Sherif (1956: 494), the 'attitude' of a person is the manifestation of his own cultural orientation and it determines a characteristic mode of behaviour in relation to relevant stimuli such as persons, events, occupations and professions including their values and ethical principles. It is believed that values, norms and ethics are internalized through the formation of attitudes (Katz and Stotland, 1959:428; Banerjee, 1967:158; Bercheid and Walster, 1969; Desai, 2000: 227). Thus knowing 'attitude' of teachers of any organisation or institution may give us better insight in the development of a code and planning of training interventions for them.

The main objective of the present study was to investigate

the relationship between teachers' demographic and professional profile and their attitude towards code of ethics of teaching profession. Until now, it is not known which particular code is being followed in India in general and Tamil Nadu in particular.

#### **Null Hypotheses**

In order to achieve the objective of the study the following main hypotheses were formulated.

 $H_{\circ}$ 1: There is no association between teachers' demographic variables (age, gender and marital status) and their ethical obligation scores – both composite as well as category wise.

*H*<sub>o</sub>2: There is no association between teachers' professional profile (includes 12 variables as mentioned in the operational definition) and their ethical obligation scores – both composite as well as category wise.

#### Operational Definitions of Terms

#### Demographic Profile

It includes the age, gender and marital status of respondents.

#### Professional Profile

It includes 12 variables: school education, UG and PG education, M. Phil, PhD, department, designation, years of experience, income, reasons behind joining teaching, status and job satisfaction.

#### Teachers' Attitude towards Code of Ethics

The 'attitude' of respondents towards the Code of Ethics is viewed as their mental disposition towards the Code under reference. For the purpose of measurement of respondents' attitude an instrument was developed after consulting a panel of experts, mostly the senior and retired professors from teacher training institutes, universities and technical institutes. For the purpose, the code of ethics of National education Association (USA), New Zealand Teachers' Council, Malteese code of teachers and code developed at Chandigarh Seminar on Student Teaching and Evaluation, NCERT, 1968 were used as source documents.

The instrument included 45 most fundamental statements of ethical obligations and a 5-point response scale. The

statements were divided in to five categories: (A) obligation towards students, (B) obligation towards parents/guardians/family, (C) obligation towards employer, (D) obligation towards colleagues and profession (E) obligation towards community/society.

The composite scores that any respondent could obtain on 'code of ethics attitude measurement scale' varied from 45-225. Similarly the ranges of scores in respective categories were as follow: 15-75, 4-20, 5-25, 14-70 and 7-35. For the purpose of statistical analyses, the section wise scores and composite scores were calculated.

#### The Method

This study was based on a questionnaire survey, conducted in the under graduate and post graduate educational institutions of Karpagam Academy of Higher Education, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu.

#### Tools

A well structured Questionnaire was used. It contained three different sections, viz. section (i) to study the demographic profile of the respondents, section (ii) for professional profile and section (iii) had an inventory of teachers' ethical obligations, divided into five categories. In section (iii), five options were given on each item on the inventory: 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'undecided', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'.

#### Sample

Since permission was not granted by other institutes, the Karpagam Academy of Higher Education was purposively selected for the study. The authors are associated with Karpagam University, one of the constituent institutes of the academy and hence have been able to get necessary permission for conducting the study. The study included Karpagam College of Engineering, Karpagam Institute of Technology, Karpagam College of Pharmacy, Karpagam Polytechnic College and Karpagam College of Education. The sample drawn from those institutions were relatively homogeneous in terms of their cultural background, terms and conditions of employment, teaching aids and institutional facilities and promotional and career advancement opportunities. Hence those institutions were selected purposively for data collection and field work was

conducted in the months of August and September, 2009.

The number of 'teachers' selected for the study came out to be 13 from faculty of arts, 5 from commerce, 33 from science and 86 from engineering and technology. Thus, the total number of sample for the study was 137.

#### Validity

For the purpose of the study, teachers' most fundamental ethical obligation statements were collected from four authentic and established Codes of Ethics and the inventory of such statements was reviewed and checked by a panel of experts. Since ethical obligations are considered as one of the essential attributes of every profession, including 'teaching', it was not a mandatory requirement to pre-check the validity of each selected statement in the inventory.

#### Results and Discussions

#### Demographic and Professional Profile of Respondents

The age of the sample ranged from less than 25 years to more than 40 years. The average age of the sample was 31.83. The majority of the respondents were female (about 58%) and married (60%) (Table 1). Most of them were working as lecturers (63.5%) and had completed their school education from State board (about 96%) and obtained their undergraduate and post graduate degrees in engineering (63% and 42.3% respectively) and science (24.1% and 22% respectively). The average teaching experience of respondents ranged from less than 5 years to more than 20 years and the sample mean was 6.99 years. Teaching had been passion to about 80% of respondents

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
Less than 25	21	15.3
25-30	55	40.1
30-35	29	21.2
35-40	17	12.4
40 and above	15	10.9
Total	137	100.0
Gender		
Male	58	42.3
Female	79	57.7
Total	137	100.0
Marital Status		
Unmarried	55	40.1
Married	82	59.9
Total	137	100.0

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=137)

and nearly the entire sample (99.3%) had a feeling that they were satisfied and had been respected (97%) in society (Table 2).

# Respondents' Attitude towards Ethical Obligations of Teaching Profession

It is expected that teachers would voluntarily subscribe to their professional code and they would have a strong inclination towards different ethical obligations of teaching profession. However, the results (Table 3) reveal that majority of the respondents have neither favourable nor unfavourable attitude towards their ethical obligations. The finding does not provide strong evidence that respondents have adequate commitment to their professional obligations.

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
School Education		
State Board	132	96.4
Central Board	5	3.6
Total	137	100.0
Designation		
Lecturer	87	63.5
Senior Lecturer	19	13.9
Asst. professor	17	12.4
Professor	3	2.2
Dean	1	.7
Director	1	.7
Instructor	7	5.1
Vice Principal	2	1.5
Total	137	100.0
UG Education	1.0	0.5
Arts	13	9.5
Commerce	5 33	3.6 24.1
Science		
Engineering Total	86 137	62.8
Total PG Education	13/	100.0
PG Education Arts	14	10.2
Commerce	6	4.4
Science	30	21.9
Engineering	58	42.3
No response	29	21.2
Total	137	100.0
Teaching Experience	107	100.0
Below 5 years	75	54.7
5-10 years	37	27.0
10-15 years	11	8.0
15-20 years	6	4.4
20 and above	8	5.8
Total	137	100.0
Reason for Opting Teaching as Career		
Its my passion	109	79.6
I had no other option	6	4.4
Wish of my parents	5	3.6
Teaching is more lucrative	16	11.7
Satisfaction	1	.7
Total	137	100.0
Job Satisfaction		
highly satisfied	67	48.9
Satisfied	69	50.4
No opinion	1	.7
Total	137	100.0

Table 2. Professional Profile of Respondents (N=137)

Sections	Obligations towards	Favourable	Attitud Neutral	le Unfavourable	Mean	\$D
1	Students	19	96	22	60.321	5.848
II	Parents/ Guardians /Friends	45	74	18	17.547	1.773
III	Employer	30	90	17	20.583	2.724
IV	Colleague	21	103	13	55.810	7.283
V	Society	31	92	14	27.700	3.559
All Sections	Composite Score	24	93	20	183.007	18.104

Table 3. Respondents' Attitude towards Ethical Obligations (N=137)

# Respondents' Demographic Profile and Their Attitude towards Ethical Obligations (AEO)

Respondents' AEO was not related to their demographic profile, such as age, gender and marital status (Table 4, 4A and 4B). The results suggest teachers' demographic characteristics may not have any impact on their attitude towards ethical obligations of teaching profession.

Hence, the null hypothesis H<sub>o</sub>1 is rejected.

#### Respondents' Professional Profile and Their AEO

Majority (95.6%, Table 2) of respondents had completed

Sections	Ethical Obligation	Test	Value	Level Significant	Result
I	Obligation towards Students	Correlation	0.05	0.05	Not Significant
II	Obligation towards P/G/F	Correlation	0.01	0.05	Not Significant
III	Obligation towards Employer	ANOVA	0.08	0.05	Not Significant
IV	Obligation towards Colleague	Correlation	0.15	0.05	Not Significant
V	Obligation towards Society	Correlation	0.08	0.05	Not Significant
All Sections	Composite Score	Correlation	0.08	0.05	Not Significant

Table 4. Association between Respondents' Age and their Attitude towards Ethical Obligations (N=137)

Sections	Ethical Obligation	Test	Value	Level Significant	Result
I	Obligation towards Students	ANOVA	1.21	0.05	Not Significant
II	Obligation towards P/G/F	ANOVA	1.01	0.05	Not Significant
III	Obligation towards Employer	ANOVA	0.64	0.05	Not Significant
IV	Obligation towards Colleague	ANOVA	0.79	0.05	Not Significant
V	Obligation towards Society	ANOVA	0.27	0.05	Not Significant
All Sections	Composite Score	ANOVA	0.87	0.05	Not Significant

Table 4A. Association between Respondents' Gender and their Attitude towards Ethical Obligations (N=137)

Sections	Ethical Obligation	Test	Value	Level Significant	Result
ı	Obligation towards Students	ANOVA	1.02	0.05	Not Significant
II	Obligation towards P/G/F	ANOVA	1.46	0.05	Not Significant
III	Obligation towards Employer	ANOVA	1.45	0.05	Not Significant
IV	Obligation towards Colleague	ANOVA	1.33	0.05	Not Significant
V	Obligation towards Society	ANOVA	0.95	0.05	Not Significant
All Sections	Composite Score	ANOVA	1.36	0.05	Not Significant

Table 4B. Association between Respondents' Marital Status and their Attitude towards Ethical Obligations (N=137)

school education from their respective State boards of secondary education and very few from Central board. The authors compared this profile with their AEO but no significant association was found (Table 5). Also, no significant association was found when AEO was separately compared with some of their professional profiles such as their M. Phil qualifications (Table 5E), sources of income (Table 5H) and reasons behind choosing teaching as career (Table 5I). However, partial associations were found when teachers' attitude was compared with their faculties (where respondents were employed, Table 5A), their designations (Table 5B), UG education (Table 5C), PG education (Table 5D), PhD (Table 5F), years of experience (Table 5G), feeling of respectfulness in society (Table 5J) and level of job satisfaction (Table 5K).

The above findings may be considered as moderate evidence to conclude that some of the variables in this category may have partial impact on attitude of teachers towards their professional (ethical) obligations.

Sections	Ethical Obligation	Test	Value	Level Significant	Result
I	Obligation towards Students	ANOVA	1.18	0.05	Not Significant
II	Obligation towards P/G/F	ANOVA	0.43	0.05	Not Significant
III	Obligation towards Employer	ANOVA	0.78	0.05	Not Significant
IV	Obligation towards Colleague	ANOVA	0.69	0.05	Not Significant
٧	Obligation towards Society	ANOVA	0.79	0.05	Not Significant
All Sections	Composite Score	ANOVA	0.96	0.05	Not Significant

Table 5. Association between Respondents' School Education and their Attitude towards Ethical Obligations

Sections	Ethical Obligation	Test	Value	Level Significant	Result
I	Obligation towards Students	ANOVA	1.78	0.05	Not Significant
II	Obligation towards P/G/F	ANOVA	1.04	0.05	Not Significant
III	Obligation towards Employer	ANOVA	0.77	0.05	Not Significant
IV	Obligation towards Colleague	ANOVA	1.59	0.05	Not Significant
V	Obligation towards Society	ANOVA	1.86	0.05	Not Significant
All Sections	Composite Score	ANOVA	1.14	0.05	Not Significant

Table 5A. Association between Respondents' Faculties and their Attitude towards Ethical Obligations

Sections	Ethical Obligation	Test	Value	Level Significant	Result
I	Obligation towards Students	ANOVA	2.33	0.05	Not Significant
II	Obligation towards P/G/F	ANOVA	0.37	0.05	Not Significant
III	Obligation towards Employer	ANOVA	2.50	0.01	Not Significant
IV	Obligation towards Colleague	ANOVA	1.06	0.05	Not Significant
V	Obligation towards Society	ANOVA	0.37	0.05	Not Significant
All Sections	Composite Score	ANOVA	1.36	0.05	Not Significant

Table 5B. Association between Respondents' Designations and their Attitude towards Ethical Obligations

Sections	Ethical Obligation	Test	Value	Level Significant	Result
I	Obligation towards Students	ANOVA	2.67	0.01	Not Significant
II	Obligation towards P/G/F	ANOVA	1.57	0.05	Not Significant
III	Obligation towards Employer	ANOVA	1.62	0.05	Not Significant
IV	Obligation towards Colleague	ANOVA	0.91	0.05	Not Significant
V	Obligation towards Society	ANOVA	0.98	0.05	Not Significant
All Sections	Composite Score	ANOVA	1.48	0.05	Not Significant

Table 5C. Association between Respondents' UG Education and their Attitude towards Ethical Obligations

Hence, the null hypothesis  $\mathrm{H}_{\circ}2$  is accepted partially but not fully.

#### Conclusion

A strong commitment towards ethical obligations has been considered as one of the most important elements of teachers' professionalism. It is believed that the integrity in teaching profession is possible if the ethical obligations are respected and followed in practice. For this purpose, a favourable attitude of teachers towards such obligations is

Sections	Ethical Obligation	Test	Value	Level Significant	Result
ı	Obligation towards Students	ANOVA	1.91	0.05	Not Significant
II	Obligation towards P/G/F	ANOVA	0.61	0.05	Not Significant
III	Obligation towards Employer	ANOVA	2.07	0.05	Not Significant
IV	Obligation towards Colleague	ANOVA	1.12	0.05	Not Significant
V	Obligation towards Society	ANOVA	0.97	0.05	Not Significant
All Sections	Composite Score	ANOVA	1.03	0.05	Not Significant

Table 5D. Association between Respondents' PG Education and their Attitude towards Ethical Obligations

Sections	Ethical Obligation	Test	Value	Level Significant	Result
I	Obligation towards Students	ANOVA	1.18	0.05	Not Significant
II	Obligation towards P/G/F	ANOVA	0.32	0.05	Not Significant
III	Obligation towards Employer	ANOVA	1.23	0.05	Not Significant
IV	Obligation towards Colleague	ANOVA	1.20	0.05	Not Significant
V	Obligation towards Society	ANOVA	0.88	0.05	Not Significant
All Sections	Composite Score	ANOVA	1.35	0.05	Not Significant

Table 5E. Association between Respondents' M.Phil Qualification and their Attitude towards Ethical Obligations

Sections	Ethical Obligation	Test	Value	Level Significant	Result
I	Obligation towards Students	ANOVA	1.86	0.05	Significant
II	Obligation towards P/G/F	ANOVA	0.63	0.05	Not Significant
III	Obligation towards Employer	ANOVA	1.21	0.05	Not Significant
IV	Obligation towards Colleague	ANOVA	1.36	0.05	Not Significant
V	Obligation towards Society	ANOVA	2.33	0.01	Significant
All Sections	Composite Score	ANOVA	1.48	0.05	Significant

Table 5F. Association between Respondents' PhD Qualification and their Attitude towards Ethical Obligations

essential. The conventional and contemporary teaching institutes, teachers' associations and similar organizations may have some lead roles in the articulation and promotion of teachers' ethical obligations. However, teachers' attitude towards professional ethics may vary according to their demographic as well as professional attributes. The findings of the study indicate that there is no association between teachers' AEO and their age, gender and marital status. However, there may have partial impact

Sections	Ethical Obligation	Test	Value	Level Significant	Result
I	Obligation towards Students	ANOVA	0.15	0.05	Not Significant
II	Obligation towards P/G/F	ANOVA	0.07	0.05	Not Significant
III	Obligation towards Employer	ANOVA	0.08	0.05	Not Significant
IV	Obligation towards Colleague	ANOVA	0.21	0.01	Significant
V	Obligation towards Society	ANOVA	0.11	0.05	Not Significant
All Sections	Composite Score	ANOVA	0.15	0.05	Not Significant

Table 5G. Association between Respondents' Teaching Experience and their Attitude towards Ethical Obligations

Sections	Ethical Obligation	Test	Value	Level Significant	Result
ı	Obligation towards Students	ANOVA	0.72	0.05	Not Significant
II	Obligation towards P/G/F	ANOVA	0.58	0.05	Not Significant
III	Obligation towards Employer	ANOVA	1.40	0.05	Not Significant
IV	Obligation towards Colleague	ANOVA	1.64	0.05	Not Significant
٧	Obligation towards Society	ANOVA	0.45	0.05	Not Significant
All Sections	Composite Score	ANOVA	0.97	0.05	Not Significant

Table 5H. Association between Respondents' Source of Income and their Attitude towards Ethical Obligations

Sections	Ethical Obligation	Test	Value	Level Significant	Result
ı	Obligation towards Students	ANOVA	0.95	0.05	Not Significant
II	Obligation towards P/G/F	ANOVA	1.54	0.05	Not Significant
III	Obligation towards Employer	ANOVA	1.52	0.05	Not Significant
IV	Obligation towards Colleague	ANOVA	0.90	0.05	Not Significant
V	Obligation towards Society	ANOVA	1.45	0.01	Not Significant
All Sections	Composite Score	ANOVA	0.90	0.05	Not Significant

Table 51. Association between Reasons for Choosing Teaching Career and their Attitude towards Ethical Obligations

of some of their professional attributes on AEO.

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Sections	Ethical Obligation	Test	Value	Level Significant	Result
ı	Obligation towards Students	ANOVA	1.19	0.05	Not Significant
II	Obligation towards P/G/F	ANOVA	1.44	0.05	Not Significant
III	Obligation towards Employer	ANOVA	2.29	0.01	Significant
IV	Obligation towards Colleague	ANOVA	0.79	0.05	Not Significant
V	Obligation towards Society	ANOVA	0.50	0.05	Not Significant
All Sections	Composite Score	ANOVA	0.85	0.05	Not Significant

Table 5J. Association between Respondents' Feeling of Respectfulness in Society and their Attitude towards Ethical Obligations

Sections	Ethical Obligation	Test	Value	Level Significant	Result
ı	Obligation towards Students	ANOVA	1.74	0.05	Significant
II	Obligation towards P/G/F	ANOVA	0.96	0.05	Not Significant
III	Obligation towards Employer	ANOVA	1.32	0.05	Not Significant
IV	Obligation towards Colleague	ANOVA	0.96	0.05	Not Significant
V	Obligation towards Society	ANOVA	0.58	0.05	Not Significant
All Sections	Composite Score	ANOVA	1.10	0.05	Not Significant

Table 5K. Association between Respondents' Job Satisfaction and their Attitude towards Ethical Obligations

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